

THE MARYLAND WILDLIFE ADVISORY COMMISSION
MINUTES – AUGUST 17, 2005

Chairman Christopher Dollar called the meeting to order at 9:45 a.m.

Approval for Minutes from July 2005 Meeting

- The July 2005 Meeting Minutes were adopted without changes.

Maryland Legislative Sportsmen's Caucus

- Presentation given by Maryland Senator John Astle, Senate Chair of the Maryland Legislative Sportsmen's Caucus (MLSC) and President of the National Assembly of Sportsmen's Caucuses'
 - (a) Commissioner Dollar asked if MLSC would address water quality and land conservation efforts during the upcoming 2006 Legislative Session.
 - (i) During this fall, the MLSC will be working with a few of the land conservation groups that are striving to address these two elements.
 - (ii) No specific bills have been contemplated.
 - (b) The National Assembly of Sportsmen's Caucuses Annual Meeting is scheduled from November 13 - 16, 2005 at the Harbour Inn in St. Michaels, Maryland. This conference will bring together state legislators, wildlife management professionals, outdoor industry leaders, and constituencies from the hunting and fishing community to discuss and share ideas that are upcoming or occurring in his or her state.
 - (c) Commissioner Dollar wanted to know if the MLSC work with the Department to ensure proper spending of the overage money from the oyster restoration fund. Also, Commissioner Lamp asked what the Wildlife Advisory Commission members could do to secure funding for DNR because General Funds have decreased to almost nothing.
 - (i) By law, Maryland's budget is compiled and completed by the Executive Branch. The legislature may only accept or cut.
 - (ii) All of the State agencies are experiencing similar cuts.

Maryland Legislative Sportsmen's Foundation

- Presentation given by Bill Miles, Vice-Chair, Maryland Legislative Sportsmen's Foundation (MLSF)
- The Maryland Legislative Sportsmen's Foundation purpose is to assist the MLSC in fulfilling their Mission. The sportsmen did not have a unified voice prior to this partnership. This year alone, the MLSF and the MLSC have accomplished two major changes in favor of conservation:
 - 1) Menhaden Harvest Cap
 - 2) Hunting Heritage Protection Act
- MLSF asked the Commission for its support to shift the start of the AP Canada Goose Season from November 17 to November 15. This would allow an opportunity for some of attendees of the National Assembly of Sportsmen Caucuses to participate in the AP Canada Goose Season along the Chesapeake Bay.
- Director Paul Peditto graciously thanked Senator Astle and Mr. Miles for their commitment to preserve Maryland's natural resources.
- Chris Dollar, WAC, Chair extended an invitation to Senator John Astle and Mr. Bill Miles to stay for the duration of the meeting.

Finalize Selections of 2005-2006 Waterfowl Season

- Presentation given by Larry Hindman, Waterfowl Project Manager.
- Summary of Public Comment on 2005 Proposed Maryland Waterfowl Hunting Seasons [**Appendix I**].
- The August 15, 2005 Public Information Meeting: Late Waterfowl Seasons and Bag Limits [**Attachment A**].
- Specific Questions Asked for Comments on the Duck, Coot, and Merganser Seasons [**Attachment B**].
- Public Comment Record on Maryland DNR's "Proposed 2005-2006 Late Waterfowl Seasons" [**Attachment C**].
- Commissioner Lamp attended the public hearing on August 15, 2005. In attendance were 45 individuals. Commissioner Lamp made comments on his concerns on expanding bag limits for the upcoming waterfowl season – good data- wrong conclusions; primary focus – AP geese [**Appendix II**].
- The Humane Society of the United States made comments on their concerns on expanding bag limits for the upcoming waterfowl season [**Appendix III**].
- Dr. E. Joseph Lamp handed out Information Pertaining to AP Canada Geese and "White-fronted Geese" [**Attachment D**].
- Discussion ensued about the science behind the population totals and the harvest rates of the waterfowl species.
 - 1) Atlantic Flyway Council members expressed their concern for scaup species. The Scaup Season has more restrictions.
 - (a) Scaup are affected by certain elements; including contamination. But the data is sketchy on this issue.
 - (b) United States Fish and Wildlife Service established more restricted frameworks for Scaup.

- 2) Regionally, canvasback are doing well, the Atlantic Flyway Council demonstrated that there is no major concern about the canvasback population. Canvasbacks are affected by habitat conditions; for example, having a drought for several years would have tremendous impact on the population and we would adjust accordingly.
- **Motion:** Commissioner Brown moved to accept the Department's late waterfowl seasons and bag limits as presented to the Commission on August 17, 2005. Further discussion continued regarding the AP Canada Goose Season and the Canvasback Season.
 - 1) Commissioner Freeland seconded the motion; Chair Dollar asked Commissioner Brown to withdraw the motion - to separate the controversial issues. Commissioner Brown agreed.
 - 2) Chair Dollar moved to vote on the regulations with the exception of the controversial items by the WAC members. Commissioner Pascal seconded the motion.
 - 3) Commissioner Pascal made a recommendation to close the Canvasback Season. Commissioner Scarborough seconded the motion. Four of the members present voted in favor and two members opposed.
- **Motion:** Commissioner Pascal made a recommendation to keep the duck bag limit at five and not increase the bag limit to six. Commissioner Lamp seconded the motion. Three of the members present voted in favor and three opposed. Motion is pending.
- **Motion:** Commissioner Scarborough motioned to accept the overall Department's late waterfowl seasons proposals with the two exceptions. (SECOND?) The members in attendance voted in favor except for Commissioner Lamp who voted against.
- **Chairman Dollar contacted the members that were absent for their votes on the canvasback and the ducks bag limit motions. Final votes: FOR the 5-duck bag limit; FOR the canvasback closure; FOR accepting the remaining season and bag limit proposals for late waterfowl.**

Break at 11:00 and Resume at 11:10 a.m.

WHS Information and Education Program

- Karina Blizzard, Associate Director, gave opening remarks.
- Doug Wigfield presented the new National Archery in the Schools Program [Attachment E].

Wildlife Diversity Advisory Committee

- Presentation given by Glenn Therres, Associate Director, Natural Heritage Program.
- Secretary Franks recently approved the development of the Wildlife Diversity Advisory Committee (WDAC) to advise the Department on non-game wildlife species and plants. These members will be reporting to the WAC.
- The first Wildlife Diversity Advisory Committee meeting is scheduled for 5:30 p.m. on Friday, September 16, 2005 in the Tawes State Office Building, C-1 Conference Room. The body consists of 12 members from the wildlife conservation community, non-consumptive recreational users, wildlife environmental education opportunities and communities, and wildlife science [Attachment F]. **OBJECTIVES OF COMMITTEE:**
 - 1) Threatened and endangered species listings
 - 2) Non-game wildlife priorities and issues
 - 3) Implementation of the Wildlife Diversity Conservation Plan and its periodic review
 - 4) Spending priorities for federal State Wildlife Grant funds
 - 5) Securing additional funds
 - 6) Other wildlife diversity issues that the committee believes warrants attention
- Note: The committee does not have oversight for game species programs.
- The Wildlife Diversity Comprehensive Plan is due to be submitted to the USFWS by October 1, 2005. The plan will be posted on the DNR website for the public to review.
- Glenn Therres thanked the Maryland Farm Bureau for their letter of endorsement for the Wildlife Diversity Comprehensive Plan.

Alternative Funding Sources

- A Non-Consumptive User Stamp. Allowing WHS to charge a small fee to non-hunters who use Wildlife Management Areas to recreate. To offset the cost of maintaining trails, parking areas and other services to these users on these lands. Birdwatchers, hikers, mountain bikers, horse-back riders, et al. use these areas but do not have to pay for access. Several States have adopted this approach in order to remove the disparity and offset declining general fund revenue.
- **Motion:** Commissioner Pascal made a motion to support the concept of WHS developing a non-consumptive user stamp that would be required of individuals that do not possess a hunting license to access Wildlife Management Areas. Commissioner Dollar seconded the motion. The majority of members voted in favor. Commissioner Brown abstained. Motion was adopted.
- **Action:** Commissioner Dollar will work with Paul Peditto to compile an endorsement letter to support the concept of a non-consumptive user stamp for WMAs.

Maryland Park Service Update

- No report.

Natural Resources Police Update

- No report.

Maryland Farm Bureau Update

- Presentation by Kurt Fuchs, Maryland Farm Bureau (MFB) Representative.
- The topics that were discussed at the Governor's Agricultural Listening Forums
 - 1) Five sessions have been held as of August 17, 2005
 - 2) Land Use Management, Profitability Farming (Value Added, Diversification and Alternative Enterprise Opportunities, and Bio-Security.
 - 3) Nuisance Wildlife problems such as geese and deer continue to be problems for farmers.

Old Business

- No report.

New Business

- Chairman Dollar asked Mr. Johnson from the Maryland Outfitters and Guides Association (MOGA) for comments.
 - 1) MOGA asked that the Department keep a close eye on the canvasback population. Commissioner Lamp deleted the statement on page 2-second paragraph from Appendix I.
 - 2) Chairman Dollar thanked the MOGA for their feedback on the late waterfowl seasons.
- Director Peditto thanked Commissioner Freeland, Commissioner Dollar, and Commissioner Lamp for attending the August 15, 2005 Public Hearing.

Adjournment

- Chairman Dollar adjourned meeting at 11:55 a.m. The next meeting will be held at 9:30 a.m. on Wednesday, October 19, 2005 in the Tawes State Office Building, C-1 Conference Room, Annapolis, Maryland.

Attendance

Members:	R. Brown, C. Dollar, W. Freeland, L. Julio, J. Lamp, R. Pascal, J. Scarborough
Guests:	D. Baker, K. Fuchs, T. Johnson
Staff:	B. Beyer, K. Blizzard, L. Hindman, H. Lynch, P. Peditto, T. Spencer, G. Therres
Absent:	L. Adams, G. Fratz, C. Garner